

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A valve shield comprising a shaped sheet of material adapted to be affixed to ~~the~~ an annulus of a cardiac valve having first and second leaflets, said shaped sheet having a given surface area configured to match and overlie at least a portion of at least one the first leaflet of the valve, and ~~said shaped sheet of material~~ adapted to ~~contact~~ the at least be contacted by a portion of the at least one second leaflet of the valve, ~~so as whereby to assist or replace the~~ facilitate closing function of ~~that~~ the valve leaflet.
2. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 1 wherein the sheet of material is adapted to prevent leaflet prolapse of the first leaflet.
3. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein ~~given surface area~~ configuration of said shaped sheet of material is crescent shaped.
4. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 3 2 wherein the portion of the sheet of material ~~contacting~~ overlying the at least a portion of the at least one first leaflet includes at least one opening therein.

5. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 3
2 wherein the portion of the sheet of material ~~contacting~~
overlying at least a portion of the at least one leaflet is
substantially solid.

6. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 2
wherein the sheet of material is adapted to be ~~fastened~~ affixed
to the annulus of the valve with sutures.

7. (Withdrawn) A valve shield according to claim 6 wherein
the sheet of material includes preformed holes for receiving the
suture.

8. (Withdrawn) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein
the sheet of material is adapted to be fastened to the annulus of
the valve with staples.

9. (Withdrawn) A valve shield according to claim 8 wherein
the sheet of material includes staples formed integral therewith.

10. (Withdrawn) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein
the material comprises biological material.

11. (Withdrawn) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein
the material comprises pericardium.

12. (Original) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein the material comprises non-biological material.

13. (Withdrawn) A valve shield according to claim 1 wherein the material is round and includes at least one opening therein.

14. (Withdrawn) A valve shield according to claim 1 wherein the shaped sheet of material comprises a wire frame.

15. (Withdrawn) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein the shaped sheet of material comprises a crescent shape with a mid-line projection adapted to support a second leaflet against prolapse.

16. (Withdrawn) A valve shield according to claim 1 wherein the sheet of material is adapted to extend over at least two leaflets.

17. (Withdrawn) A valve shield according to claim 16 wherein the sheet of material includes at least one opening therein.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for reducing regurgitation in a cardiac valve having a plurality of first and second leaflets, said the method comprising:

providing a valve shield comprising a shaped sheet of material having a given surface area configured configuration to match and overlie at least a portion of at least one the first leaflet of the valve, and said shaped sheet of material being adapted to contact be contacted by the at least a portion of the at least one second leaflet of the valve; and

affixing the valve shield to the annulus of the valve so that it contacts the shield overlies the at least a portion of at least one the first leaflet of the valve, so as to assist or replace the facilitate closing function of that the valve leaflet.

19. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 1 wherein said shaped sheet of material has a given is provided with an outer periphery, and a given length of the given outer periphery is in part shaped to correspond to at least a section portion of the annulus of the valve.